

## MIDWEST PROVINCE NEWS ITEMS

*July 1999*

Diagnosed in mid-January as having pancreatic cancer, **Br. Richard Weber** confronted his situation with the same calm determination he applied to any task, simple or complex. He educated himself on the disease and its effects as well as the variety of treatments, and observed his physical reaction to medications, chemotherapy and radiation as the months passed. Each visit to the oncologist was an opportunity to refine his understanding of the disease and its progress through the many questions he posed. He kept track of his hemoglobin count in the manner many retain baseball statistics, especially during the period when he required frequent transfusions to compensate for internal bleeding caused by the evolving encapsulation of the stomach by the rampantly advancing cancer.

Concurrently Richie was engaged in the prayerful efforts of many community members, family and friends to deal with the disease and its implications. Always open to the possibility of a miraculous cure through the intercession of others, he neither actively sought that resolution nor became the least bit discouraged when it seemed clear the cancer was not responding favorably to either prayer or aggressive treatment.

At no time did Richie lose his equanimity or sense of direction. He kept busy at his work, hoping to continue as long as he possibly could. He was especially helpful in preparing others to take up his usual tasks. He followed whatever course of action the medical profession held out to him to counter the disease, not out of fear of death but out of the same curiosity he had about the functioning of any mechanism. His body and its reaction to disease became his workshop and he was not satisfied until he had answers for any symptom he experienced. If frustration played a role at all, it was in his failing to master the predictability of his blood count from week to week.

Active until the evening before his death, which came on Wednesday, June 9, Richie collapsed at Columba Hall and was rushed to the hospital where he lingered only a few hours before dying, surrounded by several brothers and a chaplain. His passing was as he wished it to be, quick and utterly peaceful. He had stated more than once in the preceding two weeks that he no longer was anxious about whether he lived or died; he was ready for either.

The service on Sunday, June 13, was estimated to be the largest funeral held in the Brothers Center chapel. If one had not realized or understood the influence Richie had on many from several walks of life, especially Holy Cross, the developmentally challenged, and the recreational aircraft community, there was no mistaking its reality and force on this occasion. The eulogy, shared by **Br. Philip Armstrong, Sr. Betty Hopf, S.P.**, who is the hospital chaplain, and **Br. Roy Smith**, was but a sampling of meaningful reminiscences on Richie's impact on people heard both during the hours of visitation and after the graveside service.

Throughout his illness Richie taught by example everyone he encountered about accepting reality and dealing with it optimistically. Comments from the medical profession about his resignation and cheerful outlook were frequent and sincere. In his illness he helped others bear their own. By his death he modeled willing surrender to new life.

On July 4 **Br. Edward Fox** renewed his temporary vows at Boysville, where he is engaging in apostolic work this summer as part of the Bonaventure House post-novitiate formation program. Congratulations, Ed!

**Br. Dan Mallon** intends, at the expiration of his temporary vows, to leave Holy Cross. At this time he is considering continuing his studies. We thank Dan for his presence among us, wish him well and assure him of the prayers of the members of the province as he discerns his future.

**Br. Michael Amakyi**, superior of the District of W. Africa, is in the U.S. to attend in late July the Vocation Symposium sponsored by the vocation promoters of the brothers' provinces in the United States. **Br. John Tryon** is the Midwest promoter.

Appointed recently as directors of local communities by **Br. William Geenen**, provincials are **Br. Joseph Walter Olszowka**, River Grove, and **Br. Paul Kelly**, LeMans Academy.

**Br. Richard Gilman**, president of Holy Cross College, has been elected to chair the Board of Directors of Corvilla, Inc., a provider of residential services for developmentally disabled individuals in St. Joseph County. Corvilla began as a single home on Bulla Road near the Notre Dame campus with **Br. Flavius Ellison** as the first director. Since those years the agency has grown considerably and currently operates four homes, the others located on Myrtle Ave. in Clay Township and Roelke Ave. and Fellows St. on the south side of South Bend.

**Br. Carl Shonk** writes that he has completed a year and a half as chairman of the Self Study for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. LaSalle High School in Miami, where Carl has taught for 20 years, was the first Catholic school in Florida to use a new model which resulted in the framing of a five-year program for improvement. LaSalle was the twenty-fifth school in the state to complete the task and receive approval from the visiting team.

**Fr. Paul Rosing**, pastor of Annunciation Catholic Church in Akron, wrote to **Br. Barry Lambour**, "We understand that you will be moving to Notre Dame sometime this summer.... You have been an important part of our parish community the past several years and of the wider Church community for many years before that.... On a personal note, I have appreciated your pastoral ministry, your kindness and your unfailing support. May God bless you in this new phase of your ministry." Br. Barry will move to Schubert Villa later this summer.

**Br. Don Gibbs** reminds province members that *changes of address and telephone number should be sent directly to him* in a timely way. After noting necessary directory changes he will forward the information to the province business office.

Although no specific prayer requests have been submitted regarding relatives or friends of province members, there no doubt remains a variety of needs among those dear to us to be remembered as we pray.

As usual, the *Midwest Province News Items* will not be published during the month of August. Information submitted in time for an August edition will be carried over to September.